

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANA 03215 011737Z
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-03 INR-05 INRE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5223
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
USMTM RIYADH IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SANA 3215

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE
SUBJ: IMPROVEMENT OF YEMENI DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES

SUMMARY: IN SEPTELS WE HAVE OUTLINED WHAT IS NEEDED -- IN BOTH MATERIEL AND CONCEPTUAL TERMS -- FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SHORT TERM OF YAR DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES. SEPARATE PROBLEM HAS TO DO WITH PAY. YEMENIS HAVE LEFT ARMY IN LAST FEW YEARS EN MASSE DUE TO ATTRACTIVE PAY IN SAUDI ARABIA OR CIVILIAN SECTOR IN YAR. SAUDIS, IF THEY WANT TO SEE YAR ARMY MAINTAIN MANPOWER BASE FOR EXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT PURCHASES ALREADY UNDERTAKEN, ARE GOING TO HAVE TO CONSIDER PAY SUBSIDY. END SUMMARY.

1. YEMENI ARMY IS DOWN TO 10 - 12,000 MEN. SOME UNITS HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS ATTRITION IN MONTHS SINCE ASSASSINATION OF HAMDI, LARGELY BECAUSE OF POLITICAL DISAFFECTION. PARATROOPERS AND AMALIQA "BRIGADES" HAVE SEEN PROBABLY TWO-THIRDS OF THEIR RANKS SIMPLY WALK AWAY, FOR INSTANCE,
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AND WE DOUBT THAT EITHER UNIT COUNTS OVER 1,000 MEN.

2. GREATEST REASONS FOR DECLINE IN MANPOWER MUST BE READ IN CONTEXT OF EMIGRATION OF YEMENI LABOR GENERALLY TO SAUDI ARABIA AND GULF. ESTIMATES OF YEMENI WORKERS IN THESE COUNTRIES RUNS FROM 500,000 TO 1,000,000. THAT'S A LOT IN MALE LABOR FORCE WHICH, BETWEEN AGES

14 TO 45, PROBABLY INCLUDES 1,500,000 PERSONS.

3. CASUAL OBSERVERS ARE OFTEN STRUCK BY EXTREME YOUTH OF SOME SOLDIERS. THEY LOOK BARELY OVER TWELVE YEARS OF AGE, IN SOME CASES, WITH RIFLES ALMOST BIGGER THAN THEY ARE.

4. "SOLDIERS" PAY IS TERRIBLE, PROBABLY THREE TO FOUR HUNDRED RIALS A MONTH IN A COUNTRY WHERE A MASON, IN SANA, CUTTING SIX TO TEN STONES A DAY, GETS TWO TO THREE HUNDRED RIALS A DAY AND A CASUAL LABORER GETS SIXTY.

5. TO RESTORE MANPOWER LOSE IN ARMY SHARP PAY INCREASES ARE PROBABLY REQUIRED. SAUDIS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS PROBLEM. THEY CAN FOLD INCREASES INTO THEIR BUDGET SUPPORT.

6. WITHOUT SUCH INCREASES WE CAN PROBABLY GET SOME SHORT-TERM INCREASES IN COMBAT CAPABILITY, AS PROPOSED SEPTEL, BUT NOT A LOT AND NOTHING THAT CAN BE SUSTAINED. WE SHOULD RAISE THIS PROBLEM WITH SAUDIS IN ANY GENERAL REVIEW OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.
RANSOM

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